



Travellers' Perspective on Travel Health Advice in North Queensland/Australia



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Background

- Travel health advice is obtained from a variety of sources (eg. Packham 95)
- Advice generally relates to appropriate behaviour and prevention of diseases
- Advice has often been found to be incorrect, confusing, incomplete or contradicting (eg. Behrens 90, Hill & Behrens 96)
- Advice relating to diseases endemic in specific locations is neglected (eg. Corachán 95)

Aims

- To examine the current situation in relation to travel health advice in North Queensland/Australia;
- To investigate if and what kind of advice travellers seek and receive;
- To ascertain, from the travellers' perspective, the 'ideal' type and source of advice.

Methodology

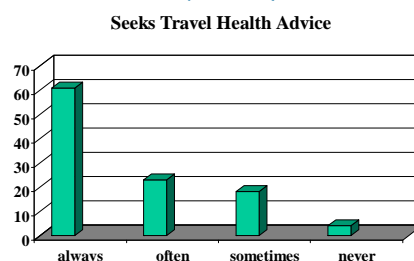
- Descriptive design
- Convenience sample of 106 travellers to destinations in developing countries
- A questionnaire was included in the travel document wallets by participating travel agencies together with a prepaid envelope
The form consisted of three parts:
 - Demographic data and information on the trip
 - Travel health advice with current source and planned source for future travel
 - The ideal provision of travel health advice

Results

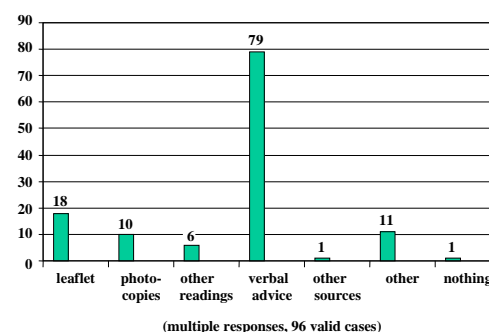
Demographic Data (n = 106)

Location	Townsville	n	%
	Cairns	87	82.1
Gender	Female	62	58.5
	Male	44	41.5
Age (range)	- 20 to 71+		
Travel	Alone	34	32.1
	With one or more adults	66	62.3
	With children under 16 years	3	2.8
	With adults and children	3	2.8
Travel Insurance	Yes	101	95.3
	No	5	4.7
Number of destinations	1	39	36.8
	2	45	42.5
	3	14	13.2
	4	7	6.6
	5	1	0.9
Destinations	Asia	61	57.5
	South America	17	16.0
	Africa	15	14.2
	Central America	10	9.4
	Pacific Region	3	2.8

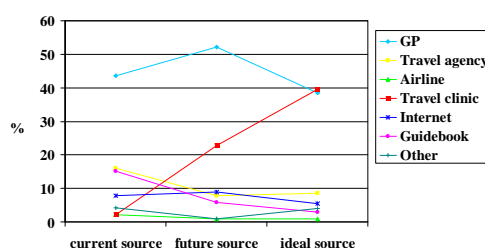
Travel Health Advice Seeking Behaviour (n = 106)



Medium of Advice



Comparison Current, Future and Ideal Source



Sources of Current Advice

	n	% of responses	% of cases
GP	83	43.5	86.5
Travel agent	31	16.1	32.5
Airline	4	2.1	4.2
Travel clinic	4	2.1	4.2
Internet	15	7.9	15.6
Guidebook	29	15.2	30.2
Family/friends	17	8.9	17.7
Other	8	4.2	8.3
Total	191	100.0	199.2

(multiple responses) 96 valid cases

Additional Comments

- 'Many different opinions from different doctors'
- 'limited availability locally'
- 'confusion all along'
- 'conflicting advice is given'
- 'we four are uncertain and confused; 2 GPs a bit similar, #3 and #4 completely different advice'
- 'he had no bloody clue what he was talking about'
- 'GP seemed uncertain, had to go through several books'

Interpretation

Travel health advice is obtained from a variety of sources and media.

While most participants of this study had sought advice before the current trip, many seemed to feel unhappy with the perceived poor quality and inconsistencies leaving travellers uncertain and anxious.

The changes in preference for travel health advice sources from current to future to ideal underline the participants' perceptions.

Conclusion

The findings suggest that there is a great need for a designated travel clinic in North Queensland to provide high quality advice that is up-to-date, correct, comprehensive, clear and consistent.